

AN  
ESSAY

TO SUPPRESS

Prophaness and Immorality,  
*Pay the Nations Debts, Support the Govern-  
ment, and Maintain the POOR.*

Humbly submitted to the LORDS Spiritu-  
al, Temporal, and COMMONS Assem-  
bled in Parliament.

WITH  
A short *POSTSCRIPT* relating to His  
*MAJESTY'S* Speech.

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By a SOCIETY for Reformation of MANNERS.

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A N

## E S S A Y

To Suppress,

## Prophaness and Immorality,

Pay the Nations Debts, Support the Government, and  
Maintain the Poor.

Humbly submitted to the LORDS Spiritual, Temporal, and COMMONS Assembled in Parliament.

By a SOCIETY for REFORMATION of  
M A N N E R S.

**I**T is not unknown to all *English* men, how frequently His Majesty has recommended to the several Parliaments in his Reign, the suppressing Vice, and that several good Bills has been added to those of former Reigns, and a particular Recommendation given to the Lords Judges, that in their respective Circuits, they should enjoyn their Execution; but the small product these Laws and injunctions have made, would make a Man almost fancy a possibility of Chymical Acts of an *English* Parliament, which would be assertive, if not dangerous to Assert; tho' there is not much difference between Chymera's and Impossibilities; and I dare affirm, that it is, and ever will be next to an impossibility, to mend *English* Men and their Manners, whilst a Latitude is given them to gratifie Corrupt Nature in the Epidemick Disease of Drinking *Strong-Drink*, as much and as oft as they can or please; but how this can be prevented is the *Herculian* Labour which has not yet been scarce so much as thought on, and for its impracticability, not attempted in any Authoritative manner; Therefore the Love I have for my Native Country, and

Whereas an  
Equity for  
the Excise, is  
the Grand ob-  
jection, the  
Reader is de-  
sired to look  
upon the 11th  
Consideration,  
and Reflect up-  
on a continual  
Pole, and sup-  
pose that it  
Commence 3  
Months before  
the Excise cea-  
seth, there will  
be no stop of  
the Revenue;  
it may be Ne-  
cessary to give  
6 Months time  
to dispose of  
Retailers  
goods; also  
that they may  
find some o-  
ther Employ-  
ments, which  
no doubt but  
honest men  
may do.

sincere Desire of their Welfare, makes me cast my Mite into the vast Treasury of others Labours: ☞ And suppose that the Prices of all Strong-Drinks that are Sold by Retail were settled by Act of Parliament to such a Price, as only wholesom Table Small-Beer could be afforded to be Brewed for Sale, the consequence is the most natural cogitation in the World; (for *Ablata Causa, tollitur Effectus.*) And that Strong-Drink is the Cause of almost all our National Misfortunes, is deducible from Matter of Fact, the Solidest of Arguments He must have but little Understanding, and less Grace, that will plead either Custom or Convenience against it; For under these two Heads are Reducible all that can be said concerning it; as to the former, I hope the sooner we are shut of Evil Customs the better; and let any one prove that selling of Strong-Drink by Retail is a good Custom, as it is used in *England*, if he can. I deny it, and Challenge all Opponents, but Drunkards and Fools, which I hope exempt themselves from being answered (by their very Names.)

And for the Latter, the most material are the Consumption of the Growth of the Kingdom, the Revenue arising therefrom; the usefulness of stronger Drink, than Table-Beer for the behoof of Mankind, and Ruin of the present Families depending thereupon; and to each of these, I shall say a little out of much, that may hereafter be said, if occasion be.

For it is no easy matter when men are got into a Road that leads to Interest and Ease, to perswade them to change it, or go the least way about to attain an ungotten Treasure, tho' never so certain at last.

To begin therefore with the Consumption of Corn, the Growth of the Nation. I conceive that whatsoever Commodity is brought to perfection in a Country, and destroyed in the same, may support, but will not enrich that Country; But thousands of Lasts of Corn is brought to perfection in *England*, and consumed by the excessive Debauchery of Drinking Strong-Drink, to the Encouragement of all manner of Vice, and beyond the Necessity of almost any single Person; Therefore this Consumption is no way profitable to the Nation, but highly detrimental in the sight of God, and any reasonable and good Man.

2ly, In regard of the Revenue arising therefrom, it is a contradiction to pretend to suppress Vice and expect a Support by

by its Continuance ; and that Government must have a bad foundation, which is Built upon the destruction of Body and Soul of its People ; 'Tis confessed, that vast Sums do accrue to the King's Coffers, which yet is but one Sixth of the Product of so much Corn wasted in Mault :

For besides what goes to the Maintaining Brewers and Ale-House-keepers in Pride and Luxury, all the rest is piss'd against the Wall, and so much Money returned to make men Wicked and Poor.

We always say, *'Tis opportunity makes the Thief*; and what is it that makes the Profane and Drunkards, but a Liberty and Opportunity to be so? For if no Strong-Drink were to be sold, (as it is in every Hole and Corner, and at every place with full License to Drink as long as they can pay) the Country Gentlemen, Tradesmen, Mechanicks and Plowmen, would be sober and frugal in spite of their Teeth; the Latters Families would be maintained in Honesty and commendable easy Fashion: And all the Complaints of our Mechanicks, That they are eaten out by *Foreigners*, would be frivolous; For 'tis their own ~~Drinking~~ Drinking, that devours their Wages; whereas the others parsimonious Living, empower them to sell Cheaper, and perhaps better Wares than can be afforded, or perhaps made by the best of our Ingenious Artists, who are usually Named with this detraotive: *He is an Ingenious Fellow but a Pot-Companion*; and the Name of Poor would be almost forgotten in a little time; For, tho' it is truly said in an Ingenious Paper, Relating to a *National Fishery*, That most People at the Gallows complain, *That Necessity brought them thither*; it may be as wisely considered, that their own Extravagancy was the Occasion of that necessity.

For in our Nation, we are so Plentifully supplied by the Almighty's Bounty, with all Things Necessary to our Welfare, if we could but understand the right use of them; that to see a Beggar in health between 10 and 60 years of Age, would bespeak either Knavery or great Folly in them and the whole Parish they belong to, provided there was no Ale sold by Retail. But whilst that is suffered, the Fault lies in neither, as it is not in their Power to Redress. And if by Redressing this Mortal Grievance, there should arise some Inconvenience for want of the Accustomed supply for the Government.

It cannot be supposed but the Wisdom of our Senators can

supply that defect by some other Tax, which every man would be able pay, by reason they could not spend their Money extravagantly, and the Taxation would lie more equal, For now he that Spends most, Pays most, yet has the most need to keep his Money. And such Men will escape with sober Heads and full Pockets, for other Uses in their Families: And Corn might be always had at Reasonable Rates; and great Stores kept in publick Granaries to supply our selves and Neighbours, in less plentiful years.

It may be taken for Granted, that mankind naturally abhors perfect Idleness; and if in Drinking nothing but the Appetite was indulged, Men would soon be weary of it. But under the Notion of Conversation, Idle and Profane Talk, Cursing, and Swearing, (which they call Pleasant Company) betrays them into loss of Time, Health, Wealth, Body, and I doubt, too many Souls into the Bargain, which would be absolutely prevented by having no Drink sold, but such as is proper to quench Thirst, which is all that Wise Nature requires at our hands for her support; and if any, or all men were Necessitous by their habit to drink stronger, Let them Brew and welcome. I am fully perswaded, they will soon be weary of giving their Drink away. For besides the Charge, none but a perfect Beast will be willing to disturb his own Family, (not even with his best Friends often.) And should a few dissolute Persons, in contempt of Virtue, and in defiance to the Regular part of Mankind, presume to continue Debauchery in their own Houses, they would soon render themselves the Object of every Man's Scorn, which would presently make them Scorn themselves for their presumptuous Folly.

'Tis most likely that another great Convenience would Spring from hence. (*viz.*) The ordinary sort of People may set an example of a temperate Hospitality, which has been of late turn'd into a Debaucht Ebriety and Voraciousness among the ablest and those we call the greater Persons; and by this means all the indispensable Necessity of Strong Drink will be answer'd to a Tittle, as I shall make it appear more fully in a Book that will be ready for the Press against the next Session of Parliament: In which will be answered all Objections in Relation to Travellers, Commerce (and the subsistence of a Standing Force, if it be thought necessary for the Honour and safety of the King-



Kingdoms) and all other Objections, with submission to the Correction and Amendments of abler Heads and more cultivated Councils.

*Lastly*, As to the present Persons maintained by Retailing Strong-Drink : If a few People, that from Nothing (an Ale-house being the last shift) are grown Opulent and haughty by other Men's Misfortunes, and their own not over honest Management, are to be preferred before a Common Good, that will surmount all the Benefits that have accrued to our Nation, for almost two Centuries, I'll submit; but whilst that be made apparent, I must take the liberty to say, That if our Ancestors did wisely descent from the Superstitions of the Church of *Rome*, their Posterity are become as blind Idolators of their own Paunches; and instead of Wooden, have set up Belly-Gods to themselves.

I shall conclude this Paper with the Opinion of a Person concerning *Tobacco*, (*viz.*) He believed it was an Invention of the Devil; and that Satan, foreseeing the Ruine of his Empire in *America*, by the Christians, did fore-close (as we may call it) their Undertakings, by causing those Poor People (then absolutely at his disposal) to Worship him with Fire and Smoak out of their Mouths; by which Means it became habitual, and was used promiscuously for Diversion and Sacrifice, when the *Europeans* arrived in their Country. A thing so contrary to Nature, that none but *Lucifer* could propose it; yet with their Gold, their new Guests swallowed their Custom of Smoaking, and transmitted them to us; and to compleat the more than pagent Tragedy, we have added Drinking thereto, and by that means have fulfilled the subtil Enemies Designs, and raised him a New Empire in *Europe*, for the loss of his old one in *America*; which I fear, is but too true,

I'll insert a Story out of the *Turkish History*, which I read long since; and not having the Book by me, cannot insert the place; but 'tis in substance; That one of their Emperours, having in some of his Wars observed, that his Army mouldred away insensibly, asked the Muffi, what should be the cause of it? Who answered, That he could give no other Reason, than that the Soldiers, who used to Eat Rice Bread and other wholesome Food, had of late lived upon fire and smoak, which could not long Nourish, but consume Nature. Upon which a Law was made against Smoaking and bringing Tobacco into the Camp; But a Merchant

chant more Covetous than honest, would venture to bring some; which being discovered to the *Grand Seignior*, he caused him to be tyed to a Stake, his Tobacco set about him, and made one smoaking serve for all. A good example, only a little *Turkish*.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

**T**HE Author of this *Essay*, having (some time since) sent it to our Society, it was considered amongst us, and (for its rare and compleat Design, exquisite penetration of Thought and Intention) conceived worthy to be published upon the Credit of its own Basis; but the Members of the Society (who desire to be unknown as yet) being Absent, and the Printer mistaking the Design, by thinking it done only to gain a Penny, did put an unintended Title to it, by which it passed for, no better than *Grubstreet*, nay not half so well; for the Hawkers could not sell it for any thing; it was too weighty and consummate for the paultrey Admirers of their Merchandizes: Yet the Title forbid any Man of Sense to Look upon it. But the Society being encourag'd by His Majesty's repeated ~~instances~~ and most Christian Desires for Suppressing Vice and Prophaneness; and by the Example of so many Persons of the Greatest Rank (in this most Honourable House) that have subscribed their approbation of a Book, Entituled, *An Account of the Societies, for Reformation of Manners*; Wherein all Persons are earnestly exhorted to be Assistant to so good a Work in their respective Capacities, they (by God's Assistance) resolved to pursue the Author's Design, so far as to lay it before this Honourable House, the proper Fountain from whence such streams of Goodness must derive, which is the utmost they can in their present Circumstances do; and tho' they pretend not to set the Project in the clearest Light by this small hint, yet they are prompt to hope and believe, that by the Sage Cultivation of this Honourable House, this *Embrio* may easily be formed into an Admirable Perfection; and they having received from the unknown Author of this *Essay* such Recommendatory Arguments in Relation to both Church and State, which in due time, (if those Considerations shall meet with Encouragement by Your Honours Approbation) may be made Publick, such as they think sufficient to Evidence not only the Truth, but the indispensable Necessity of the Undertaking; some few of which they do in all Humility propose to Your Honours Consideration.

*Frist,*



*First*, whether it be not the only way to establish our Nations Peace and Happiness, to follow our Saviour's Advice; and first *seek the Kingdom of Heaven, that all things else may be Added*; and since this must first be done; Whether we can reasonably expect the good things that are necessary to establish our Nations happy Tranquility, whilst this *Kingdom* is sought for?

*2dly*, Whether this *seeking* don't consist in *Repentance* and *Amendment* of the Nation in General, as well as your particular selves?

*3dly*, Whether any more effectual Methods can be taken to answer His Majesty's most Gracious Desires to have all manner of Vice suppressed, than by preventing the Retailing Strong-Drinks of all sorts in our Nation; and whether this Project be not as practicable as indispensably necessary, upon those Considerations?

1. Whether it be a right Notion in Politicks to set such extraordinary Taxes upon Luxury, because such vast Summs are daily consumed in Wine, Ale, Tobacco, and Coffee in the Respective Houses that Retail the same?

*2ly*, How detrimental it must needs be for any Nation to destroy so much of its Stock to so little purpose; and whether our Men, Money, and Manufactures that are exchange'd for those Trifles, be not so much Treasure given for that which makes us as insensibly Poor, as excessive Wicked?

*3ly*, Whether if all this Wealth were husbanded and employed in some other Traffick of Real use, a much greater Revenue might not be raised to the Crown without oppressing any Person, because what doth arise from those Commodities is very small, in consideration of the Value we give them, tho' we destroy them wastefully so soon as they are at the greatest Price?

*4ly*, Whether if the Retailing of Strong-Drinks were prevented, Persons of Quality, Gentlemen, and all Persons that can now afford to buy them of the Retailers, may not Drink them much Cheaper in their own Houses, where 'tis impossible so much Debauchery and Lewdness should be acted and encouraged, as in Retailing Houses it is, and ever will be?

*5ly*, Whether if these Nurseries of Vice, Faction, Dissention and Idleness were suppressed, all Persons would not spare time to frequent the daily Offices of the Church, by which our Spiritual guides would be more edifying to themselves and others?

*6ly*, Whether these Retailing Houses has not deprived more Worthy Parents of their just hopes in being happy in their Children than Death it self?

*7ly*, Whether Masters of all Ranks might not have their Business better done,

done, and with more security from being defrauded by their Servants, if they depended upon their Masters good Pleasure, for all the Strong-Drink they drank?

8<sup>ly</sup>, Whether Tradesmen in general do beleive that the Ale-House Custom was ever profitable to them, and whether from 10 to 100<sup>l</sup>. that's spent, once, twice, and in some great Towns thrice a Week, on Market-days in a Tavern, Ale, or Coffee-house, in consuming those Trifles extravagantly, would not be better laid out in our Manufactures in their Shops?

9<sup>ly</sup>, Whether it be not the Interest of *England*, to have Rents low, because all things will fall in proportion, and then we shall Work our Manufactures Cheap and be able to undersell our Neighbours in all Places, which is the only way to preserve our Commerce abroad, which at this time all Nations are Ravishing from us; nor can the Nobility and Gentry suffer by it either in Honour or Estate, by reason of the proportionate fall of all other Commodities.

10<sup>ly</sup>, Whether if no Strong-Drink were to be sold by Retail, an Army of 30 or 40 thousand Men might not be kept on Foot, Paid, be profitable, no grievance but a security to our Nation: If occasion be?

And the Poor-  
est People that  
need nothing  
will find their  
Poe returned  
double in their  
accounts at the  
years end by  
the Cheapness  
of Corn.

11<sup>ly</sup>, Let it be supposed that every Man spends but 2<sup>d</sup> *per die* *per annu-*  
gantly? If this were prevented, Whether each Person would not be able to  
pay 2<sup>d</sup> *per Week* to the King, which would double the quarterly Poise, and  
no Person oppress'd by it?

And lastly, since Reformation is so highly necessary, so much talk'd of, yet  
so little advanc'd, with all the industry of the several Societies for putting  
the Laws in Execution against offenders, it seems altogether necessary to find  
some other effectual way to put a stop to the Licentiousness of the Age,  
whereby the impending Wrath of Heaven may be averted, by reclaiming the  
People of this Nation from their continual provoking the Almighty to send  
his judgments amongst us; and if by putting this Project in execution (with-  
out which nothing but a miracle can do it) some inconvenience should hap-  
pen at first to particular Persons, it may be considered that only such will  
suffer whose Temporal welfare consists in the eternal Ruin of our Nation;  
as 'tis made Apparent in a Treatise that's ready for the Press, if these conside-  
rations meet with the desired effect; and if any Person or Society has any  
thing to object against what has been said, the Members of this Society will  
return them humble Thanks for giving them Advertisement in some of the  
publick Prints, provided always they don't advance a Temporal concern  
before an Eternal: for as those things are incompatible, they will make no  
reply, but to such as prefer things Eternal before things Transitory, for they  
have higher Aims than Revenge or Applause, and Act by a more Elevated  
Policy, than that of being known; they require from Mankind a greater  
success than either Reward or Commendation, 'tis Reformation and A-  
mendment they expect.

☞ If these Considerations meet with the desired Effect, the SOCIETY will  
make it manifest that two Millions may be raised Annually, and four saved  
to the Nation, without oppressing any People.

F I N I S.



# POSTSCRIPT.

**T**HE SOCIETY are very willing to adhere to His MAJESTY's Observations, That the *Increase of the POOR are become a Burden to the Kingdom ; their Loose and ill Life contributing to the Depravation of Manners complain'd of.* Now, whether any thing contributes so much to a Loose and ill Life through the whole Kingdom, as Taverns and Ale-Houses, and all such Receptacles of Unemploy'd People? Let every man Consider, and speak his Mind without Prejudice or Heat. For as this SOCIETY have no Sinister Designs of their own; so they have no Envidious Peak against any the most dissolute Managers of *Retailing-Houses*, no farther than what may tend to their own Eternal as well as Temporal Welfare: Therefore they desire that all such as are Concern'd to Suppress this Undertaking, upon account of either Interest or Convenience, will first seriously Consider and weigh the Motives inducing to the Project, and the present Circumstances of the Kingdom; and how necessary it is to Employ some part of the Money that is so unreasonably Spent in the Kingdom to such Uses as His Majesty mentions; and whether the Means propos'd be not the only way to make it Sufferable and Acceptable to all Capacities. For it may also be Considered, that if good Small-Beer, good Beef, Mutton, and other Viands be not wanting, no Person can Suffer, be he never so far from home; and the poorest will be able to purchase so much as he has Occasion for, without hazarding either his Time, Health, or any thing else that's truly Valuable; and tho' as it is not expected that this can be effected in a Moment; yet by making Men sensible of how small Use the Retailing **STRONG DRINK** is to the Real behoof of Mankind, they will easily part with such an imaginary Good, for a Real one; which is, Dear Countrymen, the most hearty Desire of



Your most loving Friends.